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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 7156  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 2730  
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RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 4709  
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 3396  
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN ELECTION OBSERVATION

¶1. (SBU) Summary and Action Request. We need to move quickly to field an election observation team to partially fill the hole left by the International Republican Institute's (IRI) decision not to return its observer team to Pakistan. We recommend that USAID support Democracy International under a cooperative agreement to conduct the election observation activity, using the security firm and pre-identified observers that IRI had employed. USAID/Pakistan is ready to contact Democracy International to request them to submit a proposal for funding for 20-40 observers with a mission to cover all four Pakistani provinces, with a concentration on the southern Punjab. Ambassador will formally notify President Musharraf of IRI's decision by letter and request full GOP cooperation for a Democracy International mission. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) The January 30 decision by IRI to not return its election observation mission to Pakistan comes as a great disappointment. In particular, taking this action eighteen days before the election leaves us with few options to field a presence of professional election observers. The USG has an enormous stake in helping Pakistan democratically elect a government that will be seen by its people as legitimate. Without that perception of legitimacy, the next government will not be able to effectively support our mutual fight against extremism. The elections here were never going to be perfect, but the presence of international observers would, and still can, deter electoral irregularities. We do not believe it is in the USG interest for the European Union to have the only international monitoring team on the ground in Pakistan. Therefore, we want to move forward quickly to replace the IRI team to the limited extent that might be possible.

¶3. (SBU) We know USAID is considering several options. After reviewing them, we have concluded that the quickest choice is to support Democracy International to manage the election observation activity. We realize that a contractor will not have the same reputation for independence as IRI enjoys, but we see no other option given the limited time at hand. This will allow us to add a significant number of observers on the ground quickly. If Democracy International uses the pre-identified IRI observers, they will have international experience as well. USAID/Pakistan will provide funding to Democracy International through a cooperative agreement rather than a contract, since a cooperative agreement provides a level of independence appropriate for this activity. The Asia Foundation is doing

good work here with its domestic observer team, but it has its hands full and its local partner has created some conflict of interest issues by publicly criticizing the government. We also understand the TAF board would have to make the call at an upcoming meeting, thus adding more delay to a decision to move forward. Therefore, we do not believe that TAF would be the ideal partner for this international observation mission.

¶4. (SBU) We are proposing a team of 20-40 observers with a mission to cover all four of Pakistan's provinces, with a concentration on the southern Punjab. IRI has asked its four-man Global Security to remain in place with already acquired cars, vests and radio assets. IRI has also agreed to share the list of long-term international observers who were already planning to participate in observations here. Post will work with SCA/PAB and the MFA to expedite visa issuance to Democracy International's staff.

¶5. (SBU) Action Request: Please advise by COB February 1 if there are any objections to our moving ahead immediately to engage Democracy International.

PATTERSON